

Eng. Poetry vol 44.

SIMPLICITY:

OR,

K

DOMESTIC POEMS.

*Tantaque Simplicitas puerilibus affuit annis,
Ipsa manu violas, aut candida lilia carpit
Nulla.*

OVID.

— Simple bards, by simple prudence taught,
To this wise town by simple patrons brought,
In simple manner utter simple lays,
And take for simple poems simple praise.

CHURCHILL.

L O N D O N :

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M,DCC,LXXIII.



ADVERTISEMENT.

AS Simplicity is the favourite topic of the present age, I am sensible that, in attempting to ridicule it, however slightly, I strive against the stream of fashionable opinion, which affects to decry the flowery and the elegant in poetry, under pretence of its being unnatural, and to admire nothing but the simple and easy, as the very essence of beauty.—Mr. Hume first started the thought, and critics of inferior understanding implicitly agreed to it. “Simplicity,” says that author, “passes for dullness, when it is not “accompanied with great elegance and propriety.”—I am sure, that if Simplicity, such as he describes, *passes for dullness*, it has no reason to complain, for it passes for what it certainly is.—He adds, that “excess of refinement is now more to be guarded against than ever.”—I cannot think so; and I suppose it is this caution which makes so many poets run into the insipid, the simple, and the mean.—Neither can I by any means agree with a late * author of Town

* Mr. Erskine.

B

Eclogues,

2 . A D V E R T I S E M E N T .

Eclogues, that “ a taste for florid description prevails universally.” So far from it, our poets seem to have the *Anthophobia* strongly upon them, and for fear of appearing refined to excess, run into the contrary extreme of a Simplicity disgustingly plain and unadorned.

MORN-

M O R N I N G.

B 2

7

A R G U M E N T.

- I. *Invocation to Simplicity.*—V. *The subject proposed.*—
VI. *Description of breakfast-parlour, and introductory conversation.*—XI. *Breakfast.*—XVII. *Newspaper.*—XVIII. *Reflections.*—XXIV. *Happiness at home.*—XXVII. *Conclusion.*

M O R N.



M O R N I N G.

I.

OFFSPRING of modern poetry, attend,
Nymph with thy sun-burnt cheek and ostrich-
eye!

Ah, heed my call ; thy footsteps hither bend
Still thoughtless, prattling still, SIMPLICITY.

II.

Thou that delightest o'er the level lawn
To pace along with never-varying feet,
Till dusky evening, from the peep of dawn,
Nor wish one flower thy vacant eye to greet.

III. Come,

III.

Come, with thy pleasing robe of heathy brown,
 Of woollen manufacture trimly dight,
 Which flows indeed, and scarcely flows, adown,
 And not a fold misleads the steady fight.

IV.

I call thee, Nymph; for o'er the British plains
 Wide and more wide thou spread'st thy sovereign sway;
 Inspire my ready pen, with such sweet strains
 As modern poets neither sing nor say.

V.

Bright Morning be the theme, domestic Morn;
 Then will the poem like the subject shine,
 If thou, Simplicity, my verse adorn,
 And shed thy soothing self o'er every line.

VI.

Lo! the gay sun, high-rais'd, his livelier gleams
 Warm thro' my window now begins to pour,
 Where waving woodbines interrupt his beams
 With chequer'd shadows trembling on the floor.

VII.

Scene of calm breakfasting and wedded peace,
Smiling I view thee, where no cares intrude;
Where dwell Love, Harmony, and placid Ease,
Sworn foes to fullen frowns and jarrings rude.

VIII.

And what sweet voice allures my list'ning ears?
Methought I heard my lovely Jessy's call:—
Saw'st thou thy mistress, Hannah, come down stairs?
Yes, sir, she just now past along the hall.

IX.

Did she?—Bid John then hither bring my shoes,
And, Hannah, get the breakfast ready soon;
Say, are the letters brought, or is the news?—
That tedious postman seldom comes till noon.

X.

But soft ye now—here comes my gentle dame.
My love—behold the things in order stand;
Dear partner of my life and of my name,
The glossy tea-cups wait thy ready hand.

XI. She

XI.

She smiles obliging, and we sit serene ;—
 Whatever can, to sight, or smell, or taste,
 (Like, raptur'd Milton, thy sweet garden scene)
 Be thought or found, adorns the calm repast.

XII.

Gratefully mild the fragrant Hyson tea
 Best pleases me, exotic teas among,
 With strong distaste I shun the harsh Bohea,
 Whose grating roughness much offends the tongue.

XIII.

How cool these tea-rolls in the summer-hours !
 The smoking muffin now averse we fly,
 Cold bread and well-wash'd butter now be ours,
 " But no hot rolls and butter in July."

XIV.

Thus while my humble board kind heav'n shall bless,
 Is there ought else, my love, that I can wish ?
 Is there ?—You doubt :—what would that look express ?
 She smiles, and smiling cries—*Another dish.*

XV. True,

XV.

True, my arch monitrefs;—all thanks are poor —
Crown then my wishes in this dear repast,
Crown them, my Jessy, yet with one dish more;—
And let this dish be sweeter than the last.

XVI.

But hark!—methought I heard the clarion blow,
With swelling cheeks which tardy postmen use—
Well, John;—what brings he?—any letters?—“No:
“He brings you nothing, Sir, except the News.”

XVII.

Well then;—the Chronicle of high St. James——
We'll read this history of weeks and days,
Of kings, and queens, and 'squires, and wedded dames;
Wars, burials, births, pantheons, books, highways.

XVIII.

Their Majesties to Richmond are retired,
In peaceful solitude to pass their hours;
Thrice happy pair!—Your virtues are admired,
Be love, be harmony, for ever yours!

XIX.

The King (God blefs him!) is an honest man ;
To the Queen's virtues Envy's self is just :
I'll praise Him sometimes—as I sometimes can—
And praise Her always—as I always must.—

XX.

Look, Jeffy, what a busy bustling world !
What India-scenes of plunder and debate !
What realms and states in dire confusion hurl'd,
Impell'd by savage pride, and more than savage hate !

XXI.

Here the stern Russian raves with horrid speed ;
See there the Turk advancing half the way :—
Grim Death applauds the scene, and takes his meed
By thousands and ten thousands in a day.

XXII.

Was it for this, vain man, that God design'd
His fair creation with such wond'rous art ?
Was it for this he gave th' immortal mind,
And stamp'd the heavenly form and feeling heart ?

XXIII. Oh,

XXIII.

Oh, if war's horrid storm its rage must pour,
Far may it howl from this our humble shed;
At distance may we hear the savage roar
Of human tigers, that with blood are fed!

XXIV.

Tired of the scene, with pleasure I return;
Dear peaceful home! to rest my mind on thee;
For thee, with gratitude to heav'n I burn,
Which gave me all—for thou art all to me.

XXV.

Blest be that gracious Pow'r who kindly laid,
From the world's sea, my little bark ashore;
Gave me Content in still Retirement's shade,
And bid my heart be happy, and be poor:—

XXVI.

That gave me thee, my Jessy—thee, my wife,—
Well pleas'd I dwell upon that tender name,
Which speaks th' endearing ties of social life
In titles nobler than the rolls of fame.

XXVII.

You smile, my Jeffy, at my full fond heart—

“ Love forms these smiles—but business of the day

“ Demands my care:”— then kiss me e'er we part.—

Here, Hannah, take these breakfast things away.

N O O N.

N O O N.

A R G U M E N T.

- I. *Address to Pope, and other great English poets.*—
VII. *The subject proposed.*—VIII. *Dinner, and reflections.*—XI. *Grace.*—XII. *Lettuces.*—XIII. *Pickles.*—XV. *Humble luxury.*—XVII. *Address to the British senate.*—XXI. *Partridge-soliloquy.*—XXXII. *Cloth removed.*—XXXIII. *Fruits.*—XXXV. *Wine.*—XXXVI. *Conclusion.*

N O O N.



N O O N.

I.

POPE, Young, and Thomson, whose immortal lays
 Confirm you the first favourites of the Nine,
 Whose genius forms one strong resplendent blaze,
 Where happy Art and happier Nature join ;—

II.

Tho' you, inspir'd by Nature's genuine force,
 Had unaffected powers to charm the heart,
 Yet stoop'd ye frequent in your rapid course,
 To catch the graces and the charms of Art.

III. On

III.

On thee, great Shakespear, Fancy's beams were shed,
 All unsolicited, thy lines to deck;
 O'er Nature's wilds her varying charms she spread,
 That shone "a jewel on an Æthiop's neck."

IV.

Oh thou, divinest Milton! thy sweet song
 Proves thee of Nature and of Art the child:
 Soothing, as still thy numbers roll'd along
 "The raven-wing of darkness till it smil'd."

V.

Why frown ye, sacred bards, on my essay?
 Whence shou'd that look of strong aversion spring,
 If we to fame have found a readier way,
 Nor soar up-borne, like you, on eagle's wing?

VI.

What tho' ye cull'd each flow'r on Fancy's plains,
 As with unwearied search ye rang'd along,
 We, faunt'ring, softly chaunt our artless strains
 In limp'ring sentences and still sing-song.

VII.

With no æthereal flights our spirits glow;
 Of the light muse we crave no higher boon
 Than that our numbers indolently flow
 In smooth description of Domestic Noon.

VIII.

Ah Solomon! how happily we prove
 The solid truth and justice of thy word;—
 “Better the dinner form’d of herbs, with love,
 “Than the stall’d ox, and hatred at the board.”

IX.

Yes, Jessy, this our calm Content bestows
 More genuine pleasure on the peaceful breast,
 Than titled Discord in that bosom knows,
 Where dove-like Quiet cannot fix its rest.

X.

What tho’ no rich-sauc’d Turtle grace my dish,
 Or high-wrought Plate on marbled side-boards shine;
 Yet humble Mutton gratifies my wish,
 And Queen’s-ware plates can please me when I dine.

D

XI. Sit,

XI.

Sit, Jessy :—but forget we not to give
 Thanks to that bounteous God who sends us meat;
 Then let us temperately eat to live,
 Unlike the glutton-herd who live to eat.

XII.

This firm crisp Lettuce, how extremely sweet
 It gives its cooling juices to the tongue,
 And adds an wholesome pleasure to our meat,
 The first and best the fallad-tribe among !

XIII.

But hence high-sauces, health's severest foes,
 Contriv'd to form an artificial want,
 Which uncorrupted nature never knows ;
 * Slow-poisoning troops of Pickles, all avaunt !

XIV.

Thus still contented with our little wealth,
 We eat our wholesome meal ;—and all the while
 Fast by the table stands attendant health,
 And peace with temperance look on and smile.

* See Dr. Cadogan's Treatise on the Gout.

XV.

If sometimes at my board a fatted Chick,
That highest luxury, shall find a place,
I not presume the Partridge-bones to pick,
Nor the gay Pheasant shall my table grace.

XVI.

No ; such forbidden fruit I scorn to touch ;
Game ne'er beneath my murd'ring gun shall fall :
For vulgar tastes such dainties are too much,
Let sportsmen Lords and Commons grasp them all.

XVII.

Most reverend senators, I greet you well ;
Ye seem engaged in deep and high debate :
Sage as ye are, it is not hard to tell
Why long ye argue, and why sit so late.

XVIII.

Some weighty business of Britannia's trade,
Or rules of morals thus engage your thought ;
Some wholesome law will certainly be made,
Or reformation somewhere will be wrought.

XIX.

Britannia, weeping, tells me—"Laws of game;
 "What's legal slaughter of a bird or not:
 "That band, who bear of senators the name,
 "Determine—*When a Partridge may be shot.*"

XX.

Genius of ancient Rome! how poorly mean
 Seems, in your eye refulgent, yon Divan!
 Britons! on such a subject mark the scene;
 But oh! forbear to scorn it—you who can.

XXI.

Once as I wandered at the peep of dawn,
 Close in the brake I saw the Partridge-brood
 With eager flutt'rings round their parents drawn,
 And mark'd in crouded circles how they stood.

XXII.

The mother-bird all trembling rais'd her head,
 And look'd with conscious terror every way;
 Her plaintive voice infectious sorrow shed;
 In Fancy's ear she said, or seem'd to say:

XXIII "Ah

XXIII.

- “ Ah me ! why thrill these horrors through my heart ?
“ What mean these anxious flutt’rings at my breast ?
“ Why feel my trembling limbs the sudden start,
“ Which chills my veins, and robs me of my rest ?

XXIV.

- “ Direful forebodings !—Oh, there is a cause—
“ Yes, the sad cause, alas, too well I know ;
“ This fatal morn, from man’s relentless laws,
“ Dooms me or mine to agonizing woe.

XXV.

- “ Ye little brood, that hover round my wing—
“ Perhaps for you the fatal lot is cast ;
“ Yon rising morn may quick destruction bring,
“ Yon rising morn perhaps may be your last :

XXVI.

- “ Or thou, my tender lord, whose golden eye
“ Views us with love, perhaps art doom’d to fall :
“ To thy devoted head, if death be nigh,
“ That stroke of death in ruin wraps us all :

XXVII. “ Ah

XXVII.

- “ Ah then no more thy voice at close of day
“ Shall fill with rapture my delighted ear ;
“ No more this little brood shall cross the lay
“ With flutt’ring pinions as their fire draws near !

XXVIII.

- “ But yonder, see !—along the distant lands
“ The tyrant Man, cause of my woe, appears ;
“ With instruments of slaughter in his hands,
“ The monster comes to realize my fears.

XXIX.

- “ See with determin’d step the savage walks,
“ And longs to rob your little lives of breath !
“ With stern eye fix’d, how fullenly he stalks,
“ Intent on blood, and meditating death !

XXX.

- “ Oh, be his dire intentions all in vain !
“ From these dear lives wide turn his shot away !
“ But ah ! his near approach augments my pain ;
“ Haste—let us fly—it is not safe to stay :

XXXI. “ Haste,

XXXI.

“ Haste, haste my family, my dearer part —
“ Fly, e’er the thund’ring gun shall stop your flight !
“ If thus keen apprehension rends my heart,
“ The fatal certainty will kill me quite.”—

XXXII.

But whither has delusive Fancy drawn
From the plain path my heedless steps to sport,
And wander lightly on the flowery lawn ?—
Come, John, remove the cloth, and bring the Port.

XXXIII.

And let those summer-fruits our board adorn,
Which bounteous heav’n has plac’d within our reach,
All fresh and gather’d in the early morn ;
The blood-red cherry, and the downy peach ;

XXXIV.

The scented raspberry, the currant clear,
The luscious apricot, and juicy plumb ;
Let each delightful product of the year,
Gratefully tart or sweet, in order come.

XXXV. To

XXXV.

To these the smiling wine, which temp'rance views
With looks of approbation, shall be join'd ;
Yet none, my Jessy, will we wish to use,
But blest by friendship, and with love combin'd.

XXXVI.

Health to our friends !—Oh, names for ever dear,
Whose sweet remembrance animates the soul ;
Health to our absent friends be still our pray'r !
And let two chearful glasses crown the whole.

EVENING.

EVENING.

E

ARGU-

A R G U M E N T.

I. *Address to Collins.*—V. *To the Nightingale.*—VIII. *The Subject proposed.*—IX. *Visit and Conversation.*—X. *Slander.*—XII. *Cards.*—XIV. *Evening-walk*—XVII. *by the River,*—XVIII. *on the Hills.*—XIX. *Prospect.*—XXIII. *A particular spot described.*—XXVI. *Evening-star,*—XXVII. *Concluding Address to Simplicity.*

EVENING.



EVENING.

I.

COLLINS, the friend of Evening's sober light !
 Sparkling and soft thy lines the senses meet
 Like dew ; they shine as lively and as bright ;
 They fall like dew, as gentle and as sweet.

II.

I lov'd thee once, and fain wou'd love thee still,
 But that the critic-tribe are fond to blame
 Each bold pursuit along that flow'ry hill,
 Which once was deem'd the Poet's road to fame.

- III.

I wou'd invoke thy spirit to my aid,
 While modest Evening's pleasures I rehearse;
 Wou'd with thy muse, that ever-lovely maid,
 With thy bright flame wou'd animate my verse.

IV.

But that thy * "Skirts with brede ethereal wove,"
 And thy * "Sun's Western tent and shining hair,"
 Shew thy vain joy in flow'ry paths to rove,
 While *our* Simplicity was not thy care.

V.

Hush, Philomel; thy many-varied strains
 Partake too much of meretricious art;
 The still-voic'd Chaffinch more enchants the plains
 With simple note that steals into the heart.

VI.

Cease then, ah! cease thy wildly-warbling throat,
 That strikes with undulating sounds the ear;
 Songsters that give a stiller, plainer note,
 (And therefore sweeter) we with pleasure hear.

* See Collins's Ode to Evening in Doddsley's Miscell. Vol. 1.

VII.

Forbear then thus th' attentive soul to fill,
We'll listen to the Finch's chirping glee;
Thou, Philomel, and MASON, both be still,
And leave the world to Fannius and to me.

VIII.

Enamour'd, of Simplicity I sing;
Do thou my breast, enchantress Fancy, leave,
While to the view in simple guise I bring
The mild amusements of domestic Eve!

IX.

The social Visit, and the sober Tea,
Wou'd first demand the tribute of my song;
The simp'ring Small-talk, and the soft Te-he,
With all the Chit-chat Nothingness of tongue:

X.

Nor yet unnoticed shou'd that fiend remain,
Of quick invention, but without a heart,
Slander! the parent of the keenest pain,
Tipping the female tongue with poison'd dart:

XI. Stop,

XI.

Stop, savages ;—the murderous sport forbear ;
Than life, fair reputation is more sweet ;
Stop :—and let pity urge your tongues to spare
A neighbour's fame, expiring at your feet.

XII.

Nor wou'd I, churlish, pass the busy game,
Where great Spadille reigns monarch o'er the whole,
And leads his troops of an inferior name,
To the dire Baste, or the triumphant Vole :

XIII.

Nor serious Whist, where silence guides the play,
Nor yet polite Picquet wou'd I omit,
Which serve to wheel the ling'ring hours away,
All quick creations of inventive wit—

XIV.

But that a nobler theme demands my care—
With Nature's charms to feast the longing eye,
In the wide walk to breath refreshing air,
Nor let one beauty pass unheeded by.

XV. Ere

XV.

Ere yet o'er earth the veil of Night is drawn,
Ere yet mild Evening shed her twilight ray;
While the bright sun illumines the spreading lawn,
And the hills glow before the face of day;

XVI.

Come, Jessy, take your bonnet and your gloves;
We'll stray where Nature's various charms abound;
My eager soul, a fond enthusiast, loves
With thee to wander o'er the flow'ry ground.

XVII.

Where the still river cuts the vale below,
Sweet scene! of pow'r the busy mind to sooth;
See, the bright surface scarcely seems to flow!
Pure as thy mind, and as thy bosom smooth.

XVIII.

Hence let us now to loftier scenes attend,
Where yonder rising hills approach the sky,
Along the steep by winding paths ascend,
And gain that prospect which enchants the eye.

XIX. All.

XIX.

All-forming hand of Nature ! what a sweep
Rolls down the slope of this majestic hill ;
While at its foot the valley, wide and deep,
Conspires with awe the swelling mind to fill !

XX.

And the gay scene that spreads beneath our feet,
Of cultivated grounds and verdant fields,
Seems one extensive garden, blooming sweet
With every charm which lavish Nature yields,

XXI.

Where the eye turns, above, below, around,
The varying view affords a new delight ;
Hills, woods, meads, spires, the distant blue profound,
The grand and beautiful at once unite.

XXII.

Where yonder wide horizon meets the skies,
Far as the sight can stretch along the plain,
Mark yon blue hill *, large and uncouth, it lies
Like some vast monster flumbering on the main.

* Farly Downs in Suffex,

XXIII. Oft

XXIII.

Oft might our eyes the pleasing view repeat ;
But let my ready arm support thy hand,
My gentle Jessy, to that calm retreat,
Where Art completes what Nature's self had plan'd.

XXIV.

Here round the verdant turf Syringas grow,
And the tall Holyoak exalts his head ;
Here on the barren hill gay Roses blow,
And creeping Jess'mines fragrant odours shed.

XXV.

Here the green Moss-house yields a cooling shade
To listless wanderers, at ease reclin'd,
And many a verse is round the roof inlaid,
To hint reflection to the vacant mind.

XXVI.

But yonder, mark, the distant Evening-star,
Faint beaming in the west its silver ray,
Proclaims th' approach of chill Night's ebon car,
And warns us to retire with closing Day.

XXVII.

Thus, while obsequious to the Muse I love,
 Tho' all unfit, I tune th' unpolish'd reed,
 May chaste Simplicity the strains approve,
 For thou, Simplicity, art all I heed!

XXVIII.

By thy loose locks which wrap thy shoulders round;
 By the dim lustre of thy vacant eye;
 By all that soft inanity of sound,
 Which from thy lips distils a lullaby;

XXIX.

Forgive me, Goddess, if I dared to rove,
 Led by delusive Fancy from my way!
 If here and there Imagination strove,
 From Thee to draw my devious steps astray.

XXX.

'Twas that quick Power which pour'd the soft complaint
 * Of the sad Partridge o'er her little brood;
 'Twas she that made my warm verse strongly paint
 † Our human tygers all athirst for blood.

* See Noon, Stan. 23.

† See Morning, Stan. 23.

XXXI.

Forgive thy wanderer, Goddess! now no more
A ray of Fancy thro' the gloom shall shine;
From the wide ocean swift I make to shore;
Henceforth thy Votary is wholly thine.

F I N I S,

EVENING

XXV

Twilight the wedding-bell tolls
A ray of light the gloom shall drive;
From the wide ocean I make no shore;
Henceforth the world is mine.



FINIS

